

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00342 140925Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 HA-05 AGRE-00 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 OES-07
ACDA-12 IO-13 /137 W

-----098508 141425Z /45

R 140820Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9114
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0342

BANGKOK ALSO PASS UDORN ELECTRICALLY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SPOP EAGR PDEV SREF SHUM PGOV LA
SUBJECT: REDISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

REF: A 77 VIENTIANE 1373, NOTAL, B VIENTIANE 0311

1. SEVERAL RELIABLE LAO SOURCES SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IN VILLAGE SEMINARS MARCH 13 THAT IT WOULD MOVE 1000 FAMILIES FROM VIENTIANE TO "NEW SOCIALIST VILLAGES" FROM MARCH 14 THROUGH 16. (FOR A DETAILED REPORT ON THE URBAN RESETTLEMENT PROJECT SEE REF A.) THE OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED IN SEMINARS THAT 600 FAMILIES FROM SIKHOTTABONG, SISATHANAK, CHANTHABOURI AND SAISSETTHA DISTRICTS WITHIN THE CITY OF
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VIENTIANE HAD BEEN SELECTED TO POPULATE THE RURAL AGRICULTURAL VILLAGES. ANOTHER 400 FAMILIES HAD REPORTEDLY BEEN DESIGNATED FOR THE NEW PROJECTS FROM SAITHANI AND NAsAITHONG DISTRICTS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF VIENTIANE.

2. OUR LAO SOURCES SAID THAT THE POOREST PEOPLE WITH NO RELIABLE MEANS OF SUPPORT (SUCH AS PEDICAB DRIVERS)

FROM EACH COMMUNITY WERE CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO POPULATE THE NEW AGRICULTURAL SITES. IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT SELECTED MIDDLE-MEN AND MERCHANTS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THEY WERE NOT PRODUCERS. OUR LAO SOURCES REPORTED THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, THE POOR AND UNEMPLOYED WERE PARTICIPATING WILLINGLY IN THE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT BUT THAT THE MERCHANTS WERE COMPLAINING BITTERLY.

3. THE GOVERNMENT HAD REPORTEDLY TOLD THE 1000 FAMILIES SELECTED TO CARVE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES OUT OF VIRGIN LAND THAT THEY COULD CHOOSE NOT TO LEAVE THE CITY. IF THEY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT, HOWEVER, THEY WOULD BE INELIGIBLE TO USE THE STATE STORE SYSTEM TO BUY RICE FROM THE GOVERNMENT. OUR LAO SOURCES BELIEVED THAT, REGARDLESS OF THEIR STATED WISHES, THE CHOSEN FAMILIES WOULD BE FORCED TO GO TO THE NEW SOCIALIST VILLAGES.

4. COMMENT: AS REPORTED IN REF A, THIS FORCED RESETTLEMENT OF THE URBAN POOR AND "NON-PRODUCERS" IN RURAL PROJECTS MAY INDUCE MANY PEOPLE TO FLEE TO THAILAND. ON THE OTHER HAND, RECENT SHOOTING INCIDENTS ALONG THE RIVER (REF B) AND THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE DESIGNATED FAMILIES ARE VERY POOR ARE FACTORS THAT MAY CHECK A MAJOR REFUGEE MOVEMENT.
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